

UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE



*Uncovering Needs and
Developing Empathy*



VENTURE DESIGN
TOOLKIT

IDEO



Helps you answer:

Who are the people you're designing for? / What are their attitudes,
beliefs, behaviors? / What could they use today to meet their needs
(if anything)? / Where is there room to offer something different
from the competition?



VENTURE DESIGN IS ABOUT CREATING AN EMPATHY-DRIVEN BUSINESS.

You must develop a *deep understanding* of the people you are designing for. Keep developing your understanding by *staying connected* to them over time.



WHY UNDERSTAND PEOPLE DEEPLY?

1

INSPIRES YOU

around what people need and value.

2

CREATES

a focused experience that solves real needs.

3

BUILD EVIDENCE

as you prototype and get feedback on an ongoing basis.



*Understanding
the **people you are**
designing for is
cumulative.*

*You need to start early
and keep coming
back to them.*

A woman with brown hair, wearing a blue shirt, stands on the left side of the frame, looking towards a group of children. The children are holding up green signs with a black thumbs-up icon. The background is a light-colored wall with a grid pattern. The text is centered over the image, with a horizontal line above and below it.

***Building empathy is
about gathering context
and inspiration to
fuel the design of your
venture.***



IT'S NOT LIKE TRADITIONAL MARKET RESEARCH.

<i>Traditional Market Research</i>	<i>vs</i>	<i>Building Empathy</i>
FOCUS ON DEMOGRAPHICS		FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALS
FOCUS ON TYPICAL CUSTOMERS		INSPIRATION FROM EXTREME USERS
CONTROLLED SETTINGS		NATURAL CONTEXTS
SCRIPTED QUESTIONS		DYNAMIC CONVERSATIONS
DESCRIBES EXPLICIT NEEDS		UNCOVERS LATENT NEEDS
IMPROVES EXISTING THINGS		INSPIRES COMPLETELY NEW THINGS

It's about understanding people deeply.

OBSERVATION AND EMPATHY

We do this through observation and empathy, focusing on what people *Say, Think, Feel, Use and Do*.



OBSERVATION AND EMPATHY



***This woman
has rheumatoid
arthritis.***

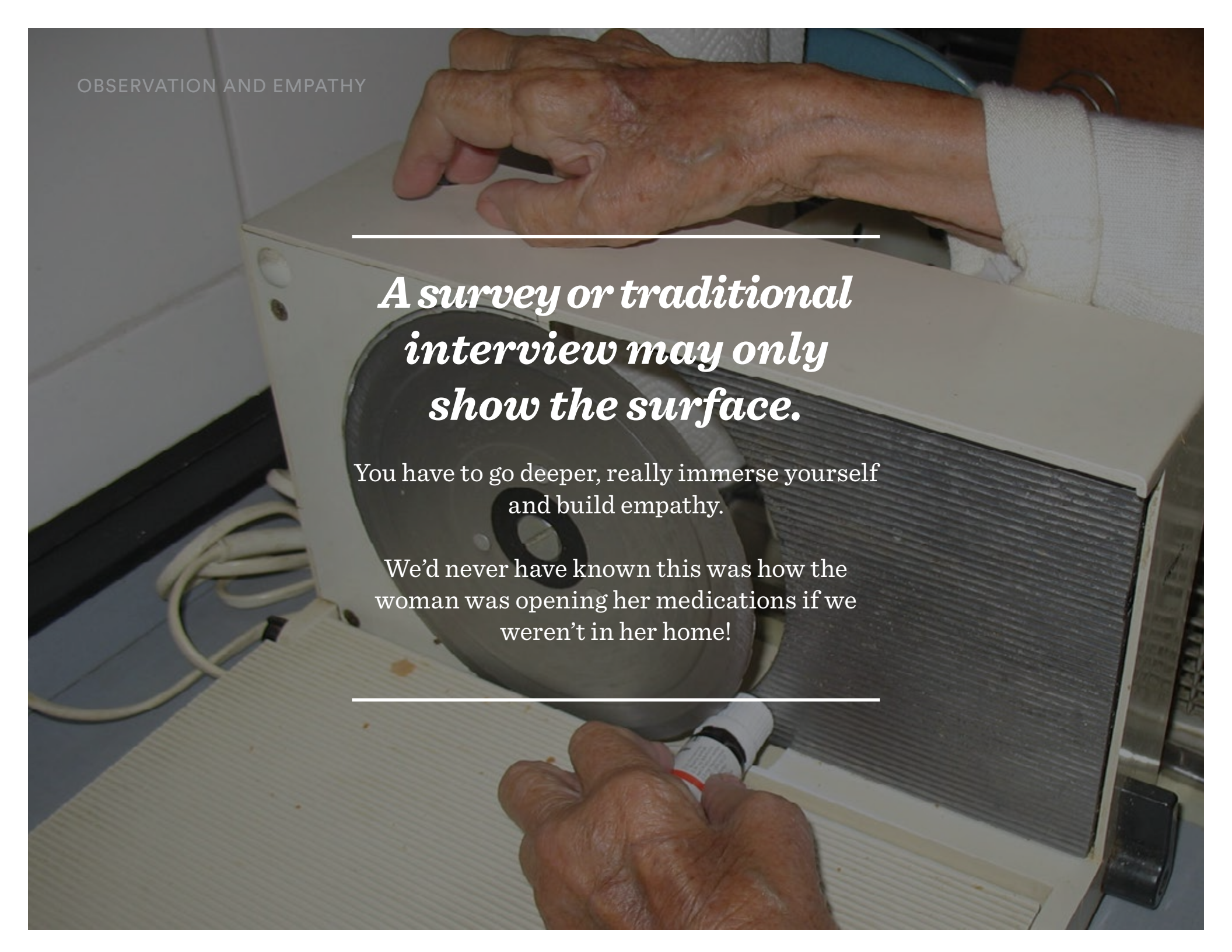
We asked her if she could open her
medication bottle.



OBSERVATION AND EMPATHY

YES, SHE CAN!





OBSERVATION AND EMPATHY

*A survey or traditional
interview may only
show the surface.*

You have to go deeper, really immerse yourself
and build empathy.

We'd never have known this was how the
woman was opening her medications if we
weren't in her home!



PEOPLE DON'T DO...

what they say they do.
what we think they do.
what they think they do.



WHEN IS UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE A FOCUS?

EARLY

In the beginning of your process, you're gather inputs, inspiration, get a baseline understanding of peoples' needs, and learn enough to start making assumptions about how you can help them.

AND OFTEN!

Empathy-driven ventures never stop trying to understand people better. On an ongoing basis, you will be getting feedback, understanding how needs evolve, and staying close to people you're designing for.



WHO ARE THE PEOPLE YOU'RE DESIGNING FOR?

There are *multiple stakeholders* your venture will come in contact with - and have the chance to win over. For each group, consider potential and current members.

- *Customers*
- *End consumers / end users*
- *Influencers*
- *Partners (such as vendors)*

You must understand and build empathy for each type of person.



WAYS TO OBSERVE AND BUILD EMPATHY

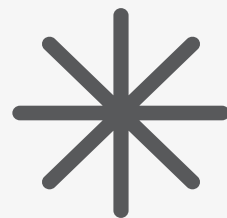


PEOPLE

Who are the people you're designing for?

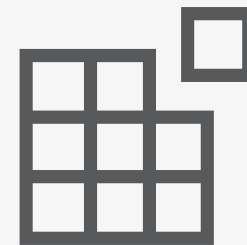
What do these customers, or potential customers, need?

What are their attitudes, beliefs, behaviors?



ANALOGIES

Who else has dealt with - and solved - a similar problem?
(typically outside your industry or competitive set)



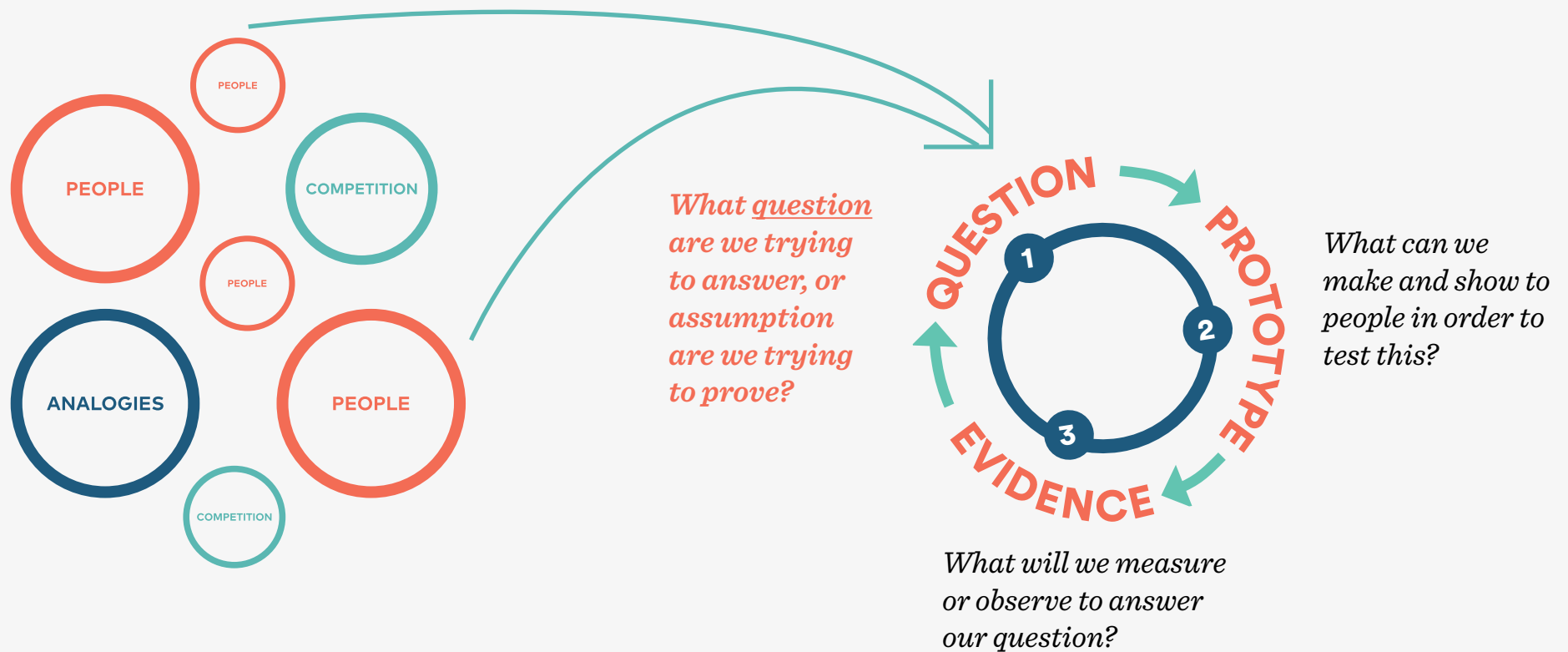
COMPETITION

What can people use today to meet their needs
(if anything)?

Where is there room to offer something different from the competition?



Observation and building empathy give you the understanding to be able to ***frame specific questions*** about how your venture can create value for people.





PEOPLE

Spending time in-context to understand your **customers** (or potential customers) at a deep level.

SOME EXAMPLES:

In-context interviews or activities:

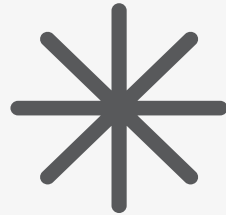
Whether through in-home interviews, shadowing or shop-along sessions, you must understand peoples' existing behaviors, mental models, and beliefs. Spend time with them to *observe*, not just ask, and witness their needs in their own environment. Go deep and spend quality time with them around sensitive topics.

Group interviews or activities: Similar to individual interviews, but with up to 6 or 7 people (more gets difficult). These can be called "Whine & Dine" where you discuss unmet needs over food and drink.

Extreme users: While you will probably meet with a range of typical users, it's helpful to get inputs from extreme users because trends that become mainstream usually start at the fringes.

Crowd check: For a quick burst of inspiration or inputs from a broad audience, use existing technologies and groups (like Facebook, Instagram) to pose an interesting question.

Empathy exercises: Activities you can do (individually or as a team) to simulate being in peoples' shoes, so you can internalize what it feels like to be them.



ANALOGIES

*Getting **inspired** from outside your category*

Instead of benchmarking within a category, get inspired by how others outside your industry have solved problems or taken a new approach. You can borrow from a piece of an experience, a business model, or the tone of a brand - and see how it could apply to your venture.



COMPETITION

*Surveying your competition, knowing **what you're up against***

It's critical to understand what people are choosing to use today and why, what is trending, what you are directly or indirectly competing with.



PEOPLE

IN-CONTEXT INTERVIEW

USE THIS WHEN:

You need to understand peoples' needs, values, and beliefs. Target mainstream people and those at the extremes for a variety of inputs and points of view.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

Mammography Experience

The team wondered why women don't get screened more frequently. Intimate, one-on-one interviews in women's homes lead to deep conversations and revelations.





PEOPLE

EXTREME USERS

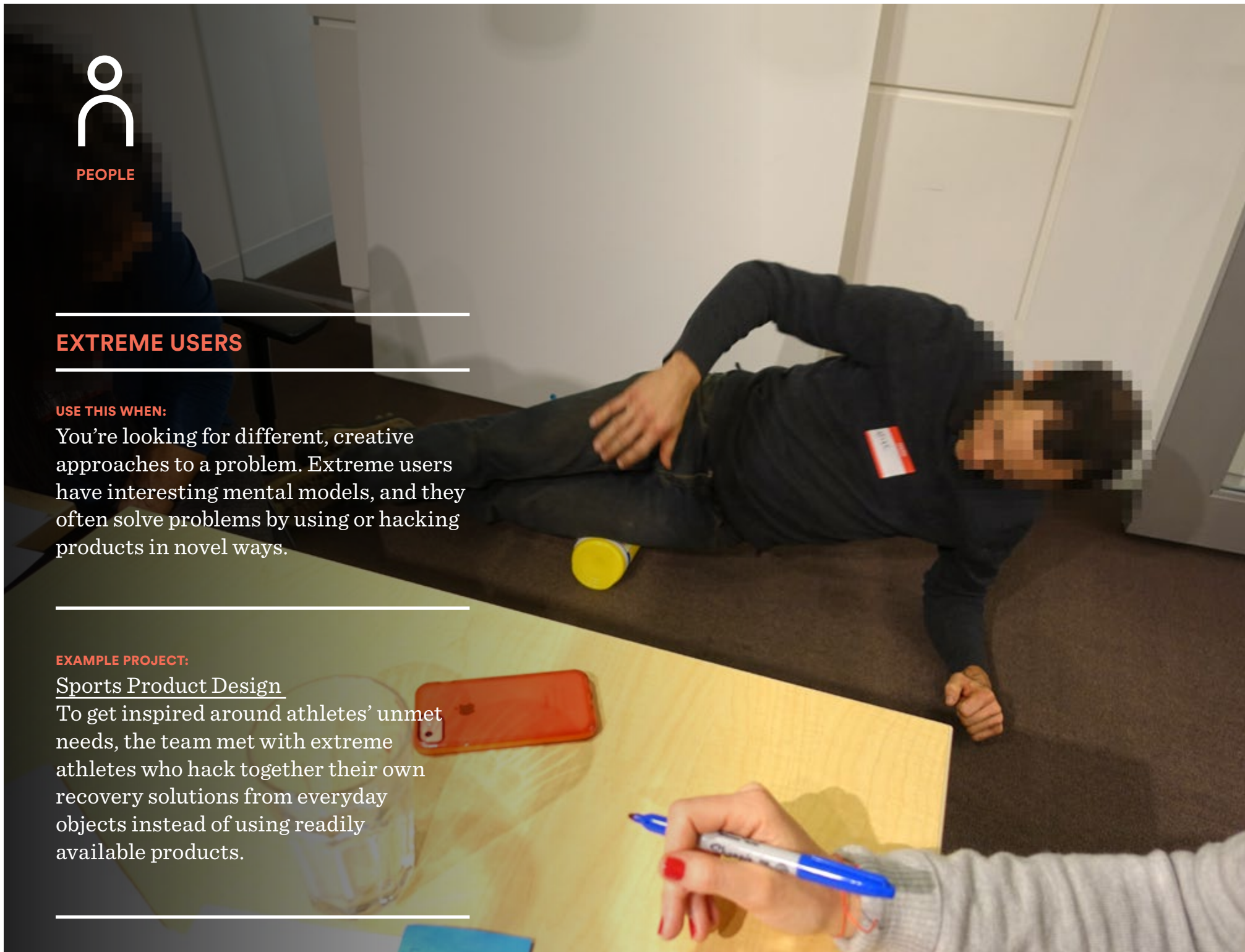
USE THIS WHEN:

You're looking for different, creative approaches to a problem. Extreme users have interesting mental models, and they often solve problems by using or hacking products in novel ways.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

Sports Product Design

To get inspired around athletes' unmet needs, the team met with extreme athletes who hack together their own recovery solutions from everyday objects instead of using readily available products.





PEOPLE

GROUP INTERVIEW/“WHINE & DINE”

USE THIS WHEN:

There is a social aspect to the problem your venture is solving, or you're seeking a breadth of mindsets/behaviors in a short time period.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

Personal Care Product

The team wanted to understand men's mindsets and behaviors around hygiene. Exercises and group discussions helped tease out how a range of millennials thought about hygiene differently than older generations.





PEOPLE

SHOP-ALONGS

USE THIS WHEN:

You want to gain insight into peoples' decision-making process. Shop-alongs help develop deep empathy for people by putting yourself in their shoes and observing the world through their eyes.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

Personal Care Product

The team wanted to understand how people shop in the retail environment - from what packaging they notice to what product attributes they value, and what trade-offs they're willing to make for a better price.



PEOPLE

CROWD CHECK

USE THIS WHEN:

You need to access a broad range of people quickly (vs. going deeper with each person) and are looking for a quick burst of inspiration. Where possible, leverage your existing relationships or lists of followers for speed and efficiency.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

Craft Beer Concepts

The team wanted to get feedback on a range of early ideas, so we cast a wide net to followers from Twitter and Instagram to get feedback.





PEOPLE

EMPATHY EXERCISES

USE THIS WHEN:

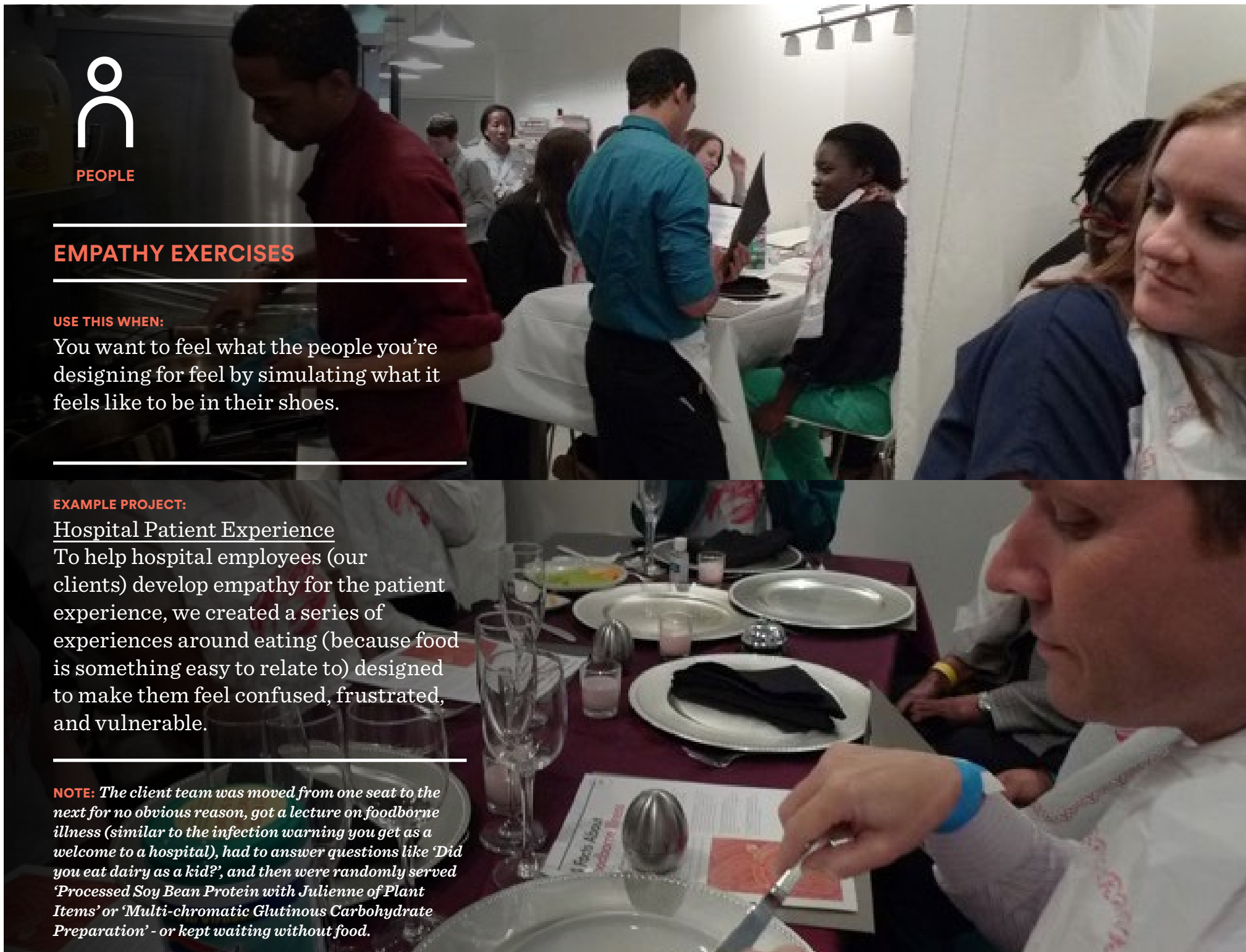
You want to feel what the people you're designing for feel by simulating what it feels like to be in their shoes.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

Hospital Patient Experience

To help hospital employees (our clients) develop empathy for the patient experience, we created a series of experiences around eating (because food is something easy to relate to) designed to make them feel confused, frustrated, and vulnerable.

NOTE: *The client team was moved from one seat to the next for no obvious reason, got a lecture on foodborne illness (similar to the infection warning you get as a welcome to a hospital), had to answer questions like 'Did you eat dairy as a kid?', and then were randomly served 'Processed Soy Bean Protein with Julienne of Plant Items' or 'Multi-chromatic Glutinous Carbohydrate Preparation' - or kept waiting without food.*





ANALOGIES

ANALOGOUS USERS

USE THIS WHEN:

Your venture's experience needs inspiration from a fresh perspective outside your competitive set.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

Pharma R&D Facility Tour Experience

To get inspired outside of science and healthcare, the team went to a chocolate factory to experience a highly immersive, educational manufacturing tour that engaged multiple senses.



ANALOGIES



TRENDS & INSPIRATION

USE THIS WHEN:

To get a fresh perspective, shift your focus to the new context of a different industry.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

Mattress Design

While designing new mattress surfaces, a team looked to trends in geometric, flexible patterns to express the mattress' responsive design to the body's movement and weight.





COMPETITION

COMPETITIVE MAPPING

USE THIS WHEN:

You need to know what already exists and how your venture can compete with experiences that currently solve the same need or similar needs.

EXAMPLE PROJECT:

New Medicine Cabinet Product

The team surveyed the competitive landscape across channels to see what is available, what brands own different sections of the shelf, and how they could offer new value in major store chains.





YOUR PLAN FOR UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE

1

Start with *questions*

2

Then think of *who to involve*
and where to look for
inspiration

3

Then, ask *how to approach*
them and *what tools* you
can use



OBSERVE PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT CONTEXT

You will get the most impact observing people *in the context where they would experience a need for your product*. You want to see where they are, what the environment is like, who is there with them, what objects they use, etc. This puts you (and the people you're designing for) in the right mindset to best understand what problems exist and what opportunities there are to solve them.





LEAVE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND

Be empathetic & open-ended

You probably set out with some hunches and assumptions about peoples' needs and behaviors - but make sure that your *questions and observations remain as unbiased as possible* so you can truly understand the world through their eyes. This means asking open questions that aren't leading, and digging deeper by asking "why" or "how" often.

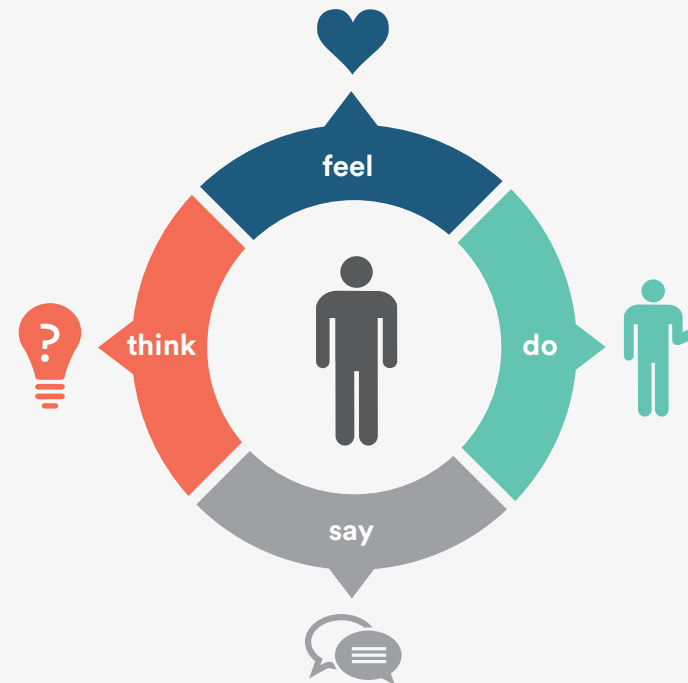




USE ALL YOUR SENSES TO OBSERVE PEOPLE:

Look for what they Do, Say, Think, Feel

This brings *peoples' needs, attitudes and behaviors to life* so you can develop deep empathy for them. When you're getting detail around what they do, say, think and feel, it is easier to imagine what you could design to meet their needs at a deeper level.





ASSIGN ROLES FOR EACH RESEARCH SESSION

So you capture what's most interesting

HELPFUL TASKS FOR TEAMMATES



Creating the discussion guide, leading the interview



Sketching ideas that come to mind during the session



Taking notes



Taking pictures



Writing down quotes, stories, memorable anecdotes



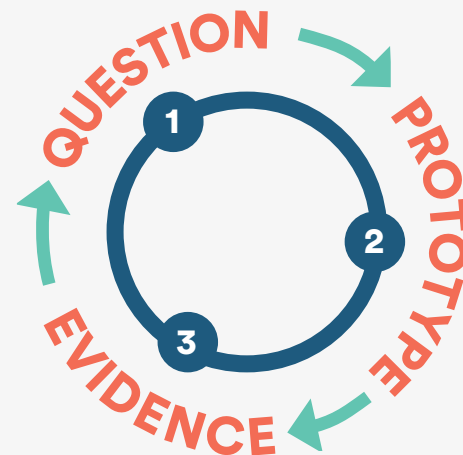
LET'S DO!

Now that you've learned more, take a shot at answering these questions:

Who are the people you're designing for? / What are their attitudes, beliefs, behaviors? / What could they use today to meet their needs (if anything)? / Where is there room to offer something different from the competition?

FOR QUESTIONS YOU STILL NEED TO ANSWER OR ASSUMPTIONS YOU NEED TO PROVE,

- What will you make / prototype?
- What evidence can you get?





WHAT'S NEXT?

DO

CURRENT EXPERIENCE JOURNEY

What do people currently experience, and where are the opportunities to make it better?

DESIGN YOUR RESEARCH PLAN

What do you want to learn, and from whom?

RESEARCH SESSION DEBRIEF

What is most important to take away from a research session?

CUSTOMER STORY

Who are you designing for, in detail?

LEARN

SYNTHESIS IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR VENTURE TO CREATE VALUE

What patterns and themes can you see from your research that could fuel your design?

ASSESSING YOUR OPPORTUNITY QUANTIFYING YOUR VENTURE'S OPPORTUNITY

What groups of people could you help, and how many people exist?

DO

BRAINSTORM SESSION

Now that you've observed people and developed empathy for their needs, what ideas can your team generate to meet those needs?

Other Resources

VIDEO

HOW TO RUN A USER INTERVIEW

BY EMMETT SHEAR

Twitch's founder discusses talking to customers and getting feedback.

ALSO AVAILABLE AS A PODCAST.

METHOD ARTICLE

USER INTERVIEWS

BY IDEO.ORG

Hints (including a quick video) to help you prepare to build empathy in user interviews.